A Certain March Gift Exchange

Note: This is a non-canon parody SS written by Kamachi Kazuma around the time of Volume 11 of the main series.

March 14.

With final exams complete, there was not much more to do than wait for spring break while wondering how the class change would turn out. Tokyo's distinctive dry cold sky did not feel like spring yet, but it would transform into the warm flower viewing season after another two weeks.

At school, it was currently lunchtime.

Kamijou Touma stared out the window and muttered to himself.

"It's been so long…"

He did not mention what exactly had been so long. A possible hint was the fact that he had first run into the girl named Index on July 20.

In the intervening time, Kamijou's right arm had been torn off, Mikoto had wandered through the boundary between life and death, Himegami had tried wearing perfume but no one had noticed, and plenty of other things had happened. However, detailing all of that would likely fill up an entire bookshelf, so it will be omitted here.

For now, the story will remain on March 14.

As Kamijou turned from the window to the back of the classroom, he saw a simple message board with several different notifications attached. A cheap calendar was included there and it had March 14 circled in red magic marker

with a note saying “Prepare yourselves, boys!!”

It was White Day.

Every girl in Japan had thrown chocolate at the boys a month before and now they were forcibly reclaiming that debt with interest. If one attempted to recreate White Day in the financial world, one would likely run afoul of the law. Incidentally, all of the boys in this school were stupidly obsessed with the chocolate itself, so they were happy to be struck by the chocolate whether it came from the girl’s true feelings or sense of obligation.

While discussing the origin of White Day’s name, Kamijou had said, “It must come from a fairy tale image of being pure white”, Tsuchimikado had insisted, “Nyah, the holiday didn’t exist originally, so it came from white nothingness”, and Aogami Pierce had jokingly announced “Ah ha! White’s gotta refer to that stuff that comes from a guy’s you-know-what!” The entire class had thrown their chairs at Aogami Pierce and he was currently in the hospital.

As Kamijou recalled that incident, one of the girls in his class approached him.

It was Fukiyose Seiri.

That strong-willed girl’s black hair was parted by brushing it behind her ears which exposed her forehead. Other points of interest were her large breasts and habit of purchasing mail order goods. She was skilled at controlling people and she had consistently worked on the committees for each consecutive Daihaseisai and Ichihanaransai. She preferred taking on multiple jobs for short periods of time, so she had little interest in being a class representative or student council officer. She had said there was little for her to improve there.

That forceful girl held her right hand out toward Kamijou.

“Do your duty.”

“Um… That sounds like you’re asking me to fight at Sekigahara or something.”

“You aren’t going to return the favor? After I went to so much effort to fulfill my obligation?”

“Uh…”

“Aren’t you at least a little thankful? Chocolate made by a girl has **** inside!!”

“At least state that part clearly!! That could be anything from love to bugs!” shouted Kamijou. “Also, I don’t recall getting any obligatory chocolate from you. No, wait. That was the day that…that happened and then… Ahh!?”

Kamijou jumped as he received a sudden divine revelation.

Meanwhile, Fukiyose stared at him with a skeptical look.

“Please don’t tell me you thought that chocolate meant something. If so, I apologize. It may hurt, but let me put an end to that delusion. I’m sorry.”

Her tone of apology seemed to say “Don’t get carried away.”

“Don’t give me that pitying look. That isn’t what I meant.” Kamijou scratched at his head. “Sorry, but I don’t remember anything about February 14.”

Late at night on the day before Valentine’s Day (or possibly past the date change at midnight), Kamijou had shouted “There’s no way I’ll get anything this year!” and started chugging alcohol in desperation. As a result, his memories of the entire day were missing.

If he was asked to return the favor, he would, but he needed to know that he had received something and how valuable it had been before he could begin to calculate what would be an appropriate return gift.

However…

“I-I can’t believe you…”

Betraying his expectations, Fukiyose Seiri received such a shock that she took a step backwards.

“You’re claiming you don’t remember after everything that happened!?”

“Waaah!?”

As Fukiyose’s breath spilled from her mouth like magma, Kamijou fell from his

seat.

“Wait, Fukiyose-san!! Why are you getting so carried away today!?”

Fukiyose did not respond to Kamijou’s honest question.

She trembled and said something else.

“You can forget about me, but you need to apologize to Himegami-san!!” she shouted while hugging the Japanese-style black-haired girl named Himegami Aisa who stood next to her. “She endured so much embarrassment to go that far for the likes of you, so how dare you say you don’t remember!? You truly are an enemy of women everywhere. Everyone would be better off if you died here and now!!”

“Eh? What?” Kamijou’s eyes opened wide. “ ‘To go that far’? What did Himegami do?”

“It’s fine. I had a feeling this would happen even if I tried that hard.”

“No, what did you do!? And why are you blushing!? Please transfer those memories into my brain!!”

But despite Kamijou’s shout, the Telepath-related espers in the class slipped out for fear of getting dragged into it. With these commotions, it was important to know how to stay safe. They were only fun as long as one remained in the audience.

And…

“K-Kamijou-chan?” said a trembling, childlike voice.

It came from the 135 cm teacher named Tsukuyomi Komoe who was standing in the classroom entrance.

“What do you mean you don’t remember what happened on February 14? After…after I used my body like that!?”

“Bh!” spat out Kamijou. “That can’t be right! When did Valentine’s become such an athletic holiday!?”

“And it wasn’t easy washing all of that out of my hair!!”

“I think the Valentine’s you’re talking about is from a different culture than the one I know! I don’t think Japan’s candy makers would approve of splattering anything in your hair!!”

Kamijou trembled in fear as he shouted, but Komoe-sensei was not listening. She began to cry and ran out of the classroom.

He blankly watched her leave, but he knew leaving her like this would cause problems later. He decided to leave Himegami behind and dashed into the hallway.

But as soon as he left the classroom, he ran across a woman he knew.

It was Yomikawa Aiho, a large-breasted PE teacher in a green tracksuit.

“Well… I overheard that conversation, but is it true you don’t remember Valentine’s?”

“Uuh… W-was I injected with your obligation power as well?” asked Kamijou while sounding somehow like Komoe-sensei.

The large-breasted woman before his eyes let out a breath and averted her gaze a bit.

“…Obligation, hm?”

“Wait! Why do you look so disappointed!?”

“I was just realizing all those ribbons I spent so long preparing ended up going to waste…”

Before Kamijou could ask “Ribbons!?”, the PE teacher disappeared unsteadily down the hallway.

Komoe-sensei, Himegami Aisa, and Yomikawa Aiho.

“Argh! Which one should I start with!?” shouted Kamijou while tearing at his head with both hands.

“Why not begin with me?”

“Kanzaki-san!? How long have you been in Japan? And why are you coming in through the window!?”

Without giving the boy a chance to shout out, Kanzaki Kaori suddenly appeared through the window with her long black ponytail shaking, grabbed him by the collar, and jumped back out of the school building. Using the ridiculous physical abilities of one of the world’s fewer than twenty Saints, she gently counteracted the impact of landing.

They were now behind the school building.

It was the stereotypical place to ask someone to meet you.

Kanzaki grinned as she looked at his face.

“Now, I hear you have completely forgotten the events of February 14.”

“How did information on my Valentine’s Day get outside of Academy City!? And why are you speaking so politely while reaching for your sword!?”

“You have to ask!? A-after asking me to do all that, how can you say you do not remember!! Covering my skin with that hot, sticky chocolate was even more uncomfortable than I thought it would be!!”

“From what I’ve heard, Valentine’s Day belongs to you on the magic side! I don’t know if that Valentine person is a man or a woman, but are they really spreading such ridiculous teachings within the Christian Church!?”

“I didn’t want to do that!!”

“You’re crying!? Are you saying I asked you!?”

Kamijou was truly confused and Kanzaki clicked Shichiten Shichitou within its scabbard.

“Do you truly not remember? Maybe I should try shock therapy with a powerful impact.”

“Why are you asking yourself instead of me!?”

Even if this was a gag, she was a Saint. It was possible she had not calculated out how much damage her tsukkomi would do to a normal person.

And so Kamijou tried to run away as fast as he could.

However…

“Wait just a second!!”

Misaka Mikoto fired a Railgun their way.

As the arcade coin flew at three times the speed of sound, Kanzaki caught it with her sword’s scabbard. However, it had more destructive power than she had expected, so she shouted “Gh, I failed to stop something so trivial!?” and was blasted through the school’s wall. It scared Kamijou how he expected her to walk unscathed out of the dust floating up into the air.

But for the moment, he cautiously turned around.

A girl from Tokiwadai Middle School stood triumphantly there and she gathered strength in her gut to shout at him.

“I thought I told you I was looking forward to White Day!!”

“Wah!” Kamijou’s shoulders drooped. “This has been the most orthodox one, but it’s still the worst one.”

“Don’t call me the worst!” snapped back Mikoto.

She seemed to have completely forgotten that she had blasted Kanzaki through a wall.

She then prepared to fire a new coin.

“Hold it right there!!”

Someone struck the back of Mikoto’s head and knocked her to the ground. It was her mother, Misaka Misuzu. She looked like a college student and she was a casual mother who did not particularly care what people said about her age.

“Does the chocolate I gave you still count?”

She tossed a bomb his way with a smile.

As Mikoto lay face down on the ground, she clenched her fingers in the dirt.

“I see. So the theme this time was a mother-daughter set.”

“D-don’t look at me! Kamijou-san really doesn’t remember!!”

Kamijou shook his head back and forth.

“Wait a moment, says Misaka as she adds on another attack.”

Misaka Imouto appeared from behind Misuzu, kicking the woman to the ground. Without even glancing down at the originals writhing at her feet, Misaka Imouto stared at Kamijou with eyes showing an unreadable emotion.

“What happened to you saying you liked Misaka #10032 as an individual rather than as just another Serial Number? asks Misaka as she reminds you what happened on February 14.”

“Waaah! Did I really say that while I was drunk!?”

As Kamijou shouted out yet again, Mikoto spoke in a low voice from the bottom of the pile.

“You’re fine with two sisters or with a mother and daughter?”

“Who is that girl anyway?” asked Misuzu while tilting her head from above her daughter.

“Misaka will appear last to end the gag! shouts Misaka as Misaka charges in!!”

A girl of about ten appeared behind Misaka Imouto and tackled the girl. Misaka Imouto collapsed on top of the Misaka family and Mikoto looked in pain at the bottom.

Kamijou was terrified that he might have done something to this small girl known as Last Order.

“So which daughter will you go with first? asks Misaka as Misaka feels absolutely ecstatic.”

“Bh!? How did you arrive at that conclusion!? No matter what happens in the meantime, situations like this have to be narrowed down to one in the end, Minimum Misaka-san!!”

“Oh, c’mon. Even you know this situation has developed well past the point where that standard method will work, says Misaka as Misaka makes sure you understand. Which. Will. You. Choose? asks Misaka as Misaka waves her index finger back and forth.”

“Do you have no idea what morality is!?”

Kamijou thought his head would burst, but Misaka Imouto decided to help him out.

“She does not share her memories, but it seems Serial Number 20001 has some unique ideas on the value of ‘experience’ among those of the Misaka family, explains Misaka as she earns points by being kind and thorough.”

“I-I see. So her situation is unique. I’m kind of surprised.”

“By the way, Misaka will never stray from her Kamijou devotion, so that sort of deception does not apply to her, announces Misaka to ensure there are no misunderstandings.”

“I’m glad, but that’s a serious thing to throw at me all of a sudden!!”

Kamijou received a direct attack that used no tricks. He had been completely drunk on February 14. He would normally doubt someone that drunk could get around to such a wide area, but he shuddered as he wondered how active he had been on that day.

Afterwards, Orsola, Sherry, and some others who did not belong in Academy City climbed over the city’s outer walls, Kazakiri Hyouka sent an email despite him never giving her his address, an archangel going by the name Misha Kreutzev threw a letter at him in the form of a prophetic slate, and plenty of

other types of confusion occurred.

He was surrounded by a storm of “You don’t remember Valentine’s Day?” and “What happened to White Day?”

Gathering all of their comments together seemed to suggest that, while Kamijou was drunk on February 14, he had travelled around the world, resolved incidents that had put the fates of nations on the line, and saved girls’ lives left and right. It was hard to believe, but it had to be the case if they were all insisting it was.

“…I can’t stand any of this.”

Exhausted, Kamijou veered off of his usual course home from school and entered an underground mall.

If he had received chocolate from them, he had to provide a gift in return.

The underground mall was made to connect the basements of department stores and a lot of the stores had put together White Day specials. However, such gifts were meant to be prepared before the day in question, so only the leftovers remained.

“White Day, hm? What should I give in return?”

In Japan, chocolate was standard for Valentine’s Day, but there was no specific standard for White Day. Everyone was different, so choosing poorly could lead to plenty of materialistic troubles beginning with “I put so much effort into my chocolate and this is what you give me in return!?”

Kamijou looked around at the different stores.

“What should I choose?”

“It looks like that’s my cue.”

Kamijou’s shoulders jumped at the sudden voice. He smelled sweet perfume and turned around to find a priest with his long hair dyed red.

It was Stiyl Magnus.

Kamijou's expression made it seem all strength had left his legs.

"Don't tell me you gave me chocolate, too…"

"If you continue that disturbing train of thought, I will burn you to death." Stiyl looked extremely displeased. "You are so terribly ignorant, that I have come to help you."

"Eh? *You're* going to help me?"

Kamijou looked skeptical and Stiyl chewed on the filter of the cigarette in his mouth.

"I do not actually want to do this, but I have no choice. Every single Anglican nun won't shut up about White Day and won't do any work. Are you trying to take over Necessarius from within? Could you stop transforming our wholesome sect into some kind of sex cult? Even our Archbishop is blushing, dammit. I really need to think about finding a new job."

His flat tone of voice made Kamijou shudder.

Stiyl spat out his half-chewed cigarette.

"I will explain. Any complaints?"

"None at all!!"

Kamijou vigorously shook his head.

"Valentine's Day was originally a lone holiday. White Day did not exist. A divine event for creating couples which existed before Christianity was combined with the various legends of two saints both known as St. Valentine. This created the meaning of 'two people coming together' and it further transformed into a ritual for a man and woman becoming lovers via the exchange of greeting cards."

"Meaning?"

"Valentine's Day alone was enough. Gifts were given and gifts were returned."

If Valentine's was a ritual of "exchanging", there was no need to "return" a second time on White Day. That would be redundant.

Stiyl pulled a new cigarette from a crumpled box.

"Valentine's is a ritual that begins when a girl gives a card to a boy."

Just by waving the cigarette, it lit and he breathed out some smoke.

He did not care at all about the world's smoking etiquette.

"But that was deemed unfair. The girls had to gather their courage to begin the ritual, but the boys only had to receive. In fact, they could simply ignore it in some cases. This must have put a lot of pressure on the girls. It probably angered them to see the boys cheerfully waiting for it. That is why they wanted some form of reward. The verbal thanks they received on February 14 was not enough for the courage they had gathered. To refer to it in a ritualistic fashion, they demanded absolute compensation worthy of the action they had taken."

"Saying it like that makes it sound like a shady demon summoning."

"Does it? If you look through the history of magic, there are several methods of gaining the affection of a specific person. If you look at it as a means of controlling emotions, romance and magic are very closely related." Stiyl sounded almost bored. "To use the science side's words, I suppose it would be an action and a reaction. If a positive action is taken, an equal negative action must be received. That's one of the very basics of the magic side."

(Huh? He used the science side's words but ended up with one of the very basics of the magic side? Are the two fields actually very similar?)

Kamijou's jumbled thoughts approached some troublesome ideas, but he decided to ignore it because he needed to focus on White Day.

"The relationship between Valentine's Day and White Day can be said to be based on the laws of a 'gift exchange'. It is more an issue of anthropology than magic, though. If Valentine's Day is viewed as a north pole, White Day is the south pole. Only Valentine's existed originally, so it was off balance. White Day was naturally created to bring it into harmony. Are you with me so far? It means White Day was created to satisfy the girls' complaints," concluded Stiyl.

“Why do you have to make it so complicated? I just have to give something in return for what I was given, right?”

Kamijou’s honest response caused Stiyl to grimace.

“*Why is it on March 14,*” he said.

“What?”

“Valentine’s Day is on February 14 because that is the day St. Valentine became a martyr. However, White Day has no origin. It just suddenly appeared.”

Stiyl spoke with a quiet expression, but Kamijou tilted his head.

“February 14 comes from St. Valentine, so doesn’t March 14 have something to do with him as well?”

“There are legends surrounding the date. Ones related to St. Valentine even. However…”

“However?”

“What does that matter?”

Stiyl’s sudden comment made no sense.

He gently breathed out some cigarette smoke before continuing.

“As I said, St. Valentine came about because the legends of multiple saints were brought together. Simply put, there really were saints named St. Valentine, but their miracles had nothing to do with fulfilling romances. They were said to have healed illnesses.”

“Eh? Then what are Valentine’s Day and White Day?”

“They have nothing to do with those saints. Various rumors fleshed out the legends of St. Valentine and he eventually became known as the lovers’ saint. The church later officially recognized all this, so it doesn’t really matter if it’s all jumbled together.”

“Hm? Then what is March 14?”

“That is the question. Even if the date is based on the legends of St. Valentine, that is only after playing a game of telephone with the reality of St. Valentine. There naturally will be unclear parts of the story.”

The cigarette in the corner of Stiyl’s mouth waggled up and down as he spoke.

According to him, the name White Day was exclusive to Japan. However, the tradition of “returning the favor” on March 14 existed under other names overseas.

So why did it have to be March 14?

Stiyl summarized the important points.

“The event was created from girls’ complaints, but why did it end up on March 14? Who decided it would be? What rules led to that date? This is one of the world’s mysteries that theology has yet to solve, so why does everyone continue following the tradition of White Day without giving it any thought?”

“Huh?”

Kamijou tilted his head.

Why was that? His previous heartwarming mood had changed to an ominous feeling that brought a suspenseful sweat to his palms.

Stiyl continued speaking.

“This exchange of romantic feelings has spread to a worldwide level. You may think I am being ridiculous, but this plays a large role in the history of mankind. White Day did not originally exist and March 14 brought about a change on the spiritual level. In other words…”

“Y-you can’t mean…”

“Yes. A key to solving the mysteries of Christianity’s theological structure might be hidden here!”

Stiyl’s announcement was accompanied by the loud sound effect of an impact.

“I didn’t want to take the conversation in that direction,” complained Kamijou as he held his head in his hands.

However, Stiyl continued speaking loudly.

“And this year, you did all sorts of things on Valentine’s Day!”

“You’re saying I did those things!? I didn’t just get dragged into them!?”

“If you had not, that cool and composed Kanzaki would never have been brought close to tears from embarrassment while preparing a bathtub filled with chocolate and waiting for you in nothing but a towel.”

“Why the hell is it March!? I want to go back to February!!”

Kamijou stomped his feet in frustration, but he could not return to that bygone season. That misfortunate boy gave up and decided to live in the moment.

“Now that Valentine’s Day has changed, it is only natural for its partner holiday of White Day to change as well. My mission is to eliminate that change while also elucidating the secret laws of Christianity hidden behind the two holidays!!”

“What kind of nonsensical conclusion is that!?”

“I must solve this mystery!!”

“Dammit, he’s not listening!!”

Now that he had his justification, Stiyl was truly in his element. Whether he kicked, punched, or chased him around with his flame sword, he could claim it was all necessary to investigate the source of the problem, Kamijou Touma. For someone who had built up so much resentment, nothing could have been better.

As Stiyl Magnus gave off a negative aura that showed a disaster could occur if he got carried away, the students in the underground mall began moving away from him.

But then…

“Ahh!? It’s that priest from back then!!”

Komoe-sensei’s voice filled the underground mall so suddenly it seemed she had teleported there. The flame priest jumped like a child caught while up to no good.

The tiny female teacher looked up at him with much-too-pure sparkling eyes.

“You should have told me you would be here! You too, Kamijou-chan. You need to tell your teacher this kind of thing. What brings you here today, Mr. Priest? How long will you be staying? I never managed to thank you properly, so I am motivated to do that now!!”

The aura of human goodness emanating from Komoe-sensei’s body caused Stiyl to flinch. The teacher had likely wanted to check with Kamijou about some things concerning the Valentine’s commotion, but she seemed to be prioritizing Stiyl at the moment. It was very teacher-like.

Seeing that, Kamijou dug in his ear with his little finger and gave a disinterested expression.

“Um… Stiyl-kun here was putting together some theories related to Valentine’s Day and White Day, so he came to punch me-...”

Before Kamijou could finish, Stiyl jabbed his cigarette into his side from an angle Komoe-sensei could not see.

Without even glancing toward Kamijou who was writhing in pain, Stiyl turned his back on them with such force that his clothes whooshed through the air.

“I will be leaving!!”

“Ehh!? P-please wait!!”

The two of them quickly ran off. At first glance, it looked like a child pursuing an adult, but it was actually the exact opposite.

“So what did I do on February 14? And what is the secret of Valentine’s Day and White Day?”

Kamijou spoke his honest questions, but the exposition characters from the magic side and science side had already left.

Simply put, it had all started on February 14.

White Day was essentially something extra added to Valentine's Day, so this empty event would vanish if Valentine's Day did not exist.

Which meant…

"I wish I could go back to February."

But no matter how much Kamijou complained, he would still be in March.

He looked around the underground mall. He had thought candy and marshmallows were the standard White Day gifts, but the stores were also selling stationery, hats, bouquets of flowers, and other items that seemed less relevant. Kamijou chose carefully in order to avoid any landmines such as giving flowers in return for an obligatory gift.

But when he checked his wallet, he realized he had little money on hand. That meant he had to return to his dorm room to get some money. As he rode the elevator and walked down the passageway, he ran across a maid-in-training sitting on top of a drum-shaped cleaning robot. Her name was Tsuchimikado Maika.

"Give me something in thanks for the chocolate. Obligatory is fine."

Kamijou added another person to his list.

Meanwhile, he arrived at his room.

He opened the door and found a pure white nun sitting politely in the center of the room.

This was Index, the Anglican Church's trump card who had accurately memorized 103,000 grimoires.

"Wow. Now this is a heavy atmosphere."

The other roommate, a small calico cat, was hissing threateningly at the cute pet

show on TV. The cat seemed to be saying “Th-this is my turf!!”

The combination of the silent nun and the ominously hissing kitten caused Kamijou to freeze up in the entrance.

“Touma, do you have anything to say to me?”

“It’s not my fault!!”

Kamijou turned tail and tried to run from the room, but the pure white nun leaped even more quickly toward him, attached to his back, and bit mercilessly into the back of his head.

“It’s White Day, so why do you look like you haven’t prepared anything, Touma!?”

“Gwaaaah!!” screamed Kamijou in great fear and pain.

This was not a scene from White Day.

This was some other ritual.

“Wait, Index!! I simply can’t imagine you giving me chocolate!! Or any kind of food at all, for that matter!! You always eat any food within reach!!”

“What!?” Despite her great shock, Index continued to cling to Kamijou’s back. “I-I worked hard on Valentine’s Day! I stood in a kitchen filled with strange equipment and ingredients, held a cookbook in one hand, and struggled into the late night melting down the chocolate!!”

(Why isn’t it February right now?)

Kamijou thought he was going to cry, but it was definitely March. That bygone season would not return. He was not going to find a time machine and the ultimate time leap magic was not going to activate.

Even so, Kamijou simply could not accept it.

As he had said, Index was a gluttonous girl who he could not imagine handing over any food within her reach.

“Index. I must ask something and I am putting on the best expression I can while you are still attached to the back of my head.”

“What is it, Touma?”

“Did you really give me chocolate?”

“I really did make it!!”

“And you didn’t end up eating the chocolate you made?”

“Ah.”

Hearing Index’s quick noise of realization, Kamijou crossed Index’s name off of his mental White Day list.

The worst part was that he had completely expected this.

He wanted to tell St. Valentine to go to hell.

That nun had a perfect memory, so she would not simply forget. It was possible she had eaten it without even noticing.

“…”

Meanwhile, Index silently got down from his back and sat in the corner with her arms around her knees. That seemed to be the cat’s favorite place because it began protesting as if to say, “Get out of my spot!”

“Laugh,” said Index. “Laugh at me. I would feel better if you made fun of me and called me stupid.”

“Um , but…”

The more hopeless the guy, the less they could say at a time like this.

After five seconds of awkward silence, Kamijou finally spoke.

“You tried your best, so that’s good.”

“That kind of sympathy hurts the most!!” Index shouted out, spread out on the

floor, and beat her small fists on the flooring. “I was proud of what I had made! I was happy because I know I’m no good at cooking! So I just wanted to take a small taste!! That was all! But then…!!”

It was an incredibly cute reason, but Kamijou thought it was going a bit far to go on and eat all of it. However, he was kind enough to remain silent.

Index continued speaking while using her entire body to let out her intense feelings of grief.

“I know it means nothing now, but it really was a success. It was so good I lost all control.”

“You lose control around food about once every three days, but if you insist, it must have been really good. Well, there’s always next year, so don’t get so down.”

“I went to all the trouble of thoroughly analyzing chocolate as a stimulant rather than an indulgence and I used the process of melting and hardening to develop it into a ritualistic food based in witchcraft.”

“And now I’m glad I didn’t eat that ominous occult food!!”

“What do you mean by that!?”

Index regained her energy and began eating the back of Kamijou’s head once more. She was surprisingly resistant to being beaten down like that, or at least quick to recover.

She then spoke while still attached to his head.

“Nevertheless, it’s White Day today! You need to follow the rules of the gift exchange and give me candy or marshmallows!!”

“You’re hungry year round, so does it even really matter if it’s White Day or not!?”

“Touma, you idiot!!”

“A punch!?”

He was unable to withstand the powerful blow to the back of his head, so he was knocked forward. The cat lying lazily on the floor sluggishly avoided him as if to say, “C’mon, don’t roll this way.”

Kamijou lay sprawled out on the flooring.

“Your biting doesn’t matter anymore! If you’re that good at close quarters combat, you don’t need someone to protect you! You’re a human weapon!!”

“Touma, that isn’t how White Day works.”

“You’re just going to ignore me!?”

“The gift exchange carried out over Valentine’s Day and White Day is about responding to each other’s feelings! It doesn’t matter if the chocolate was actually given or not! From the moment I made chocolate for you, the feelings were there, so you can still give me something on White Day!!”

“Eh? So you mean just returning the ‘feelings’ is enough on my side as wel-… I’m sorry! I understand that isn’t how it works, so please don’t use your back teeaaaaaaaaaahhhh!?”

A terribly unpleasant grinding sound filled the dorm room.

The wild and dynamic noise caused the cat to bristle its fur.

“H-how about I, Kamijou Touma, be your White Day present? And I don’t mean that in a euphemistic and perverted way. I mean it in a literal and physical sense.”

“Touma.” Index removed her mouth from his head to speak. “Exchanging feelings is a sign that you care about the other person’s feelings. It doesn’t matter how tiny the gift is. What matters is that you give something to prove that you responded to their feelings.”

“Mh…”

“While it is the feelings inside that really count, the ritual of a gift exchange is needed to give those feelings a physical form. I messed up on Valentine’s Day, so it would be wrong of me to stress this too much. But if someone else really

did give you chocolate, you mustn't do anything to make light of their feelings."

Index lectured him.

When he thought about it, he realized she really had gone to the effort of making chocolate the day before Valentine's Day. She may have eaten it all in the end, but it made him plenty happy that she had actually made chocolate for a guy like him.

He nodded.

"You're right. I need to give you something as well. Especially because you worked at making something yourself instead of just buying it."

"Eh? N-no, I don't deserve that…"

"Even if it was out of obligation, chocolate is chocolate."

"Obligation!?"

"Of course. Someone with as much misfortune as me would never get any chocolate with real feelings behind it. Even thinking it would be rude to you, wouldn't it? Yeah. Thanks, Index."

"Eh? Um, uh…waaahh!!"

Index's eyes spun around in her head, she tore at her hair with both hands, and she rolled around on the floor. It seemed she wanted to tell him something, but she was apparently hesitant to put it to words.

Her mouth flapped open and closed several times, but a different line ultimately came out.

"Wh-what's wrong with obligation!? It doesn't bother me at all!!"

"???"

Index had some tears in her eyes, but Kamijou was unsure what could have happened.

"Um…" He thought for a moment. "Well, obligatory chocolate is better than

nothing at all. Anyway, I need to give serious thought toward what to give everyone, you included."

Index's shoulders twitched.

"Touma… You mean there are others?"

"Yeah. All obligatory."

"…"

Index stared at his face for a while, but she gave a heavy sigh once she saw no sign of deception in his expression. It seemed to be a sign of resignation.

"Now, what should I get? Something too expensive would just be a bother for them."

"As long as they can tell your heart was in it, anything is fine."

"That's the hardest part… Well, 500 yen each is probably standard."

As he spoke, Kamijou suddenly felt something light underfoot. It felt like stepping on a leaf, but there were no leaves in the dorm room. He looked down and saw some envelopes.

Several envelopes.

They also contained the stamp for airmail that he did not often see.

"Mh?"

He picked them up and Index told him that Maika had brought them by.

Kamijou opened one envelope and pulled out the letter.

It was airmail from overseas, but it was written in polite, neatly-written Japanese.

"It is White Day, so please prepare enough return gifts for fifty people. Due to the time difference, we will wait about a day. –Girls of the Amakusa Christian Church's London Branch."

(Fifty?)

Unpleasant sweat dripped down Kamijou's brow.

At 500 yen each, that was 25,000 yen.

He recalled the main Amakusa force being around fifty people, but this may have included the non-combat members.

He then checked the next envelope.

"Sister Lucia and Sister Agnese are being quite stubborn, but please prepare some gifts because I believe they will be delighted if they receive something in return. Oh, and the exact number of people is 252. –Sister Angelene on behalf of the Roman Catholic Order of Nuns stationed in London."

"Over 250!?" shouted Kamijou.

With them and the Amakusas, he was already over 300.

And the next letter made it even worse.

"Currently, the Misakas are scattered around the world undergoing physical adjustments, but if you send 9969 Misaka's worth of gifts to the usual hospital, they will be distributed appropriately, reports Misaka while hiding an excessive amount of expectation. –From #10032, one unit of the mass produced military espers known as the Sisters."

Kamijou thought he was going to collapse from shock.

He could no longer just go to the store and buy this.

He would have to order directly from a wholesale store.

"Wait! How many is this in total!? And if I really had this much chocolate thrown at me on February 14, I think I would have been literally crushed to death! What happened on Valentine's Day!?"

"Touma," said Index smoothly. "What matters is the feelings you are responding to."

“Please listen! I’m pretty sure this problem has gone beyond the point where that kind of idealism will cut it! Just having the number 10,000 in there causes inflation!! Dammit. Does the misfortune stick with me even when I actually get chocolate on Valentine’s Day!?”

“This is divine punishment for not responding to people’s feelings,” muttered Index in her heart.

Kamijou’s eyes rolled around in his head.

“I know! Index, do you know anything about what happened on Valentine’s Day!?”

“It would be a pain to explain it in words. Writing it in a journal would fill up three volumes.”

“I see. So it’s a three-parter.”

Kamijou received a slight hint, but he still had too little information.

He set the stage for discussing it with Index and finally succeeded in getting more out of her by giving her the fish sausage he had been hiding in the back of the refrigerator for a snack.

“You won’t learn the full scope of that incident if I just explain it. You ran off on your own for most of it, so there are parts I don’t know about.”

“So it really was an incident. But if you can’t explain it, what do we do?”

“I have a spiritual item for just such an occasion!!” announced Index happily.

(A spiritual item? So it’s some sort of magical item?)

“Do you really have some convenient item that will tell us what I did on February 14?”

“There are plenty of spiritual items that show you the past or the future. We used that one called Malachy’s Prophecies at the end of summer.”

“One quick thing: no saying it’s called Tree Diagram. Cheating like that would

destroy everything.”

“Touma, what is a Tree…whatever?”

It seemed those rules were still in effect even in a parody.

(But what else is there?)

Index stuck a hand under the bed, rummaged around, and pulled something out. It was a square board about fifty centimeters across. From what Index said, the Anglican Church had sent it to her. That may have been a job for that voluptuous courier.

Index placed the board on the glass table and spoke loudly.

“Tah dah! It’s called the February 14 Diorama!!”

“That name is cheating!!” Kamijou slammed his hands against the glass table. “All the previous names were somehow related to Christian traditions or had some kind of history to them, but now the name is just what it is!? How can you pull out an item that sounds like it was created for this exact problem!? Are you insane!?”

“Touma,” cut in Index. “A week is based in traditions from the Old Testament and a month is based on the movements of the sun. Do you also want to hear where a year and a century come from? In other words, the effortless name isn’t what matters. The magical symbolism is included in the unit of time itself. This is pretty Amakusa-like.”

“…Are you sure you’re not making this up as you go?”

Kamijou turned a skeptical eye toward Index, but she put her hands on her hips and confidently puffed out her chest.

“Touma, Touma. Have you forgotten about how Inou Tadataka made the coordinate movement magic ‘Miniature Pilgrimage’ by creating the Great Japanese Coastal Map? That was a miniature spell based in the movement of the stars. Changing that to the movement of the sun shouldn’t matter. It’s just that Inou Tadataka’s used space while this one uses time. Eh heh heh. All of that was foreshadowing this moment!!”

A loud explosion sound effect came from behind Index.

Something similar had happened with Stiyl, so Kamijou figured it was an Anglican tradition.

“I don’t remember any of that…”

“Ehh!?”

“That foreshadowing is past its expiration date. It might not mean much to you and your perfect memory, but it’s March. What month was that stuff with the Something-or-Other Map in?”

It was not so much that Kamijou had a bad memory as it was that he had been having a large battle once every three days. Sometimes he even ended up involved in three or four consecutive incidents in a twenty-four hour period. As someone who was swimming through the Sanzu River on a daily basis, he was not going to devote much effort to remembering some old map from the Edo period.

At any rate, he had to decide what to do with the February 14 Diorama.

He turned toward the flat, ordinary-looking board.

“How do I make this thing show me what happened on Valentine’s Day?”

“Don’t touch it, Touma. Let me do it.”

Imagine Breaker finally made an appearance.

And now that things were getting magic-related, Index grew excited.

She wiped her palm across the flat board and something like sand gushed out of it. Trees, roads, and buildings the size of candy then grew up out it.

“Ah!? What the hell!?”

“It seems a magician left this spiritual item behind after trying to investigate the causal relationship between Valentine’s and White Day. It can reproduce people’s experiences on February 14 from many different viewpoints.”

Stiyl's discussion reappeared here.

(Was he being serious about that?)

Kamijou gradually started to pay more attention.

"Let's see… The target individual is T-O-U-M-A-K-A-M-I-J-O-U."

Index tapped her index finger on the edge of the board to control it somehow.

And a clear change occurred.

The chaotic arrangement of trees and buildings suddenly ordered itself.

It seemed the board was creating a diorama of Academy City. The roads, wind turbines, roadside trees, and buildings all accurately moved into place. And a small figure walked through the diorama. He must have been a resident of that city.

A boy with spiky black hair walked down the center of the board.

Kamijou had been drunk at the time and the figure on the board was staggering as he walked.

Like a scrolling screen in an RPG, the boy remained in the center of the board no matter how much he walked. The surrounding scenery moved instead. When the roads and buildings scrolled off the edge of the board, they crumbled and new trees and turbines appeared on the opposite side.

"I see. So if we watch this diorama, we'll know what I did on February 14."

In a corner of his heart, Kamijou stated to think White Day did not matter all that much anymore. Still, he was curious what had happened on Valentine's Day. He would handle White Day afterwards, so he turned back toward the February 14 Diorama.

The spiky-haired figure's actions took an unexpected turn.

"W-waaaaaaah!? I'm gonna die! If you drop something that huge on me, I'll die! Each one is as big as a train!! Wait…I'm dodging them? Wow, the diorama me is

whooshing out of the way! Wait, now a girl with wings is slowly floating down from the sky. What is going on?"

"Oh, that's the cocoa magician that attacked Academy City on Valentine's Day."

"Index, you're clearly just making this up!! She's obviously attacking me with a hammer that has nothing to do with chocolate! Oh, shit! And she's strong! Careless, but really strong!! …Come to think of it, why is she trying to hit me? Eh? This is 5:40 in the morning on February 14? What was I doing out that early in the morning!?"

"Touma. From a magical perspective, chocolate is a food used for mental control, so…"

"Stop looking so serious while you say things like that, Index. …Gyah!! The diorama me was hit by the cocoa hammer and slammed into that building. … How am I still alive!? Eh? The drunken fist? I may have been drunk that day, but did I really gain a strange skill like that!? Ah, wait. Dwaah!! A figure that looks like Mikoto is running over from down the road! Hide, Kamijou Touma!! If she finds you, it's all over!!"

"By the way, you will fly about three hundred meters in another ten seconds."

"You're kidding!" shouted Kamijou in disbelief. "If all these crazy things happened over so short a time, why didn't anyone ever mention them afterwards!? I don't remember hearing a word about any of this after February 14!!"

"Of course no one said anything concrete. They can't. After all, you destroyed the fragmenting stagnation in the firmament, so…"

"Ehhh!? What does that even mean!? What the hell did I do!?"

"That's what we're trying to find out, Touma."

After that, the spiky-haired boy in the diorama punched people, was punched, disappeared behind a cloud of dust caused by an explosion, jumped into a river, had a dragon-like creature breath fire on him, was attacked by a black macho man with a goat's head, was chased around by the cocoa magician who had wings, and did plenty of other things. He could not imagine how the day

progressed from there to the lovely events that gave him chocolate in units of tens of thousands.

As Kamijou Touma watched it, he nodded once.

He had made up his mind.

“I’m truly glad it’s March right now.”